(c) whether it is also a fact that these projects would have brought 20 Mha of land under irrigation compared to the only 7 Mha worth of irrigation facility at persent; and

(d) if so, the reason for delay and the action proposed thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAY PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) According to the Land Use Statistics for 2003-04 compiled by Ministry of Agriculture, the net sown area in the country is estimated to be 140.9 million hectare and the net irrigated area is 55.1 million hectare *i.e.* 39.10%.

(b) The Working Group on Water Resources for the XIth Five Year Plan constituted by the Planning Commission in its report mentioned about spill over of 388 major and medium irrigation projects into XIth Plan. This includes 23 projects which started prior to Vth Plan and a total of 157 projects which were taken up prior to April, 1992. In addition, 89 ERM projects are also identified as projects spilled over to XIth Plan.

(c) As per the report of the Working Group on Water Resources for the XIth Five Year Plan, the total envisaged irrigation potential of the 388 major and medium irrigation projects and 89 ERM projects is 19.95 million hectare out of which only 7.26 million hectare has been created so far.

(d) The important reasons for delay in completion of the projects are inadequate provisions of funds in State budget, delay in transfer of funds to the executing agencies and delay in land acquisition etc. Irrigation being a State subject, irrigation projects are conceived, planned and implemented by the State Governments as per their own priority. The Government of India provides central assistance to the State Governments for completion of on-going irrigation projects under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP). The AIBP criteria have been relaxed and procedures simplified to cover more projects under this programme.

CLARIFICATION BY MINISTER ON THE REPORTED REMARKS MADE BY THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON ABOUT THE INDO-US BILATERAL CIVIL NUCLEAR ENERGY COOPERATION AGREEMENT

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Minister of External Affairs is to make a statement ...(*Interruptions*)... Please let the Minister of External Affairs make a statement. ...(*Interruptions*)... Please sit down. Thank you very much.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Mr. Chairman, Sir, with your permission, I would like to clarify certain points. As I understand from my colleagues, the hon. Members expressed their anguish and unhappiness over certain remarks purported to be made by the Ambassador of India in U.S.A. Sir, I contacted the Ambassador and I obtained his clarification. But I told him that we will require a fresh clarification from him. But before that, let me place on record what I am to say. It will not take more than two minutes. I will crave the indulgence of the hon. Members as one of their old colleagues.

I have contacted our Ambassador who has informed me that certain comments, either deliberately or through misunderstanding, were published by the

correspondent. The correspondent has also misquoted our Ambassador in several respects.

I have asked our Ambassador to clarify his position. These comments, if made by our Ambassador, and reported correctly, are totally unwarranted and unacceptable. In democracy, there will always be dissension and divergence of opinions. Nobody can accuse others who hold divergent views. I regret the alleged comments which have hurt the feelings of the hon. Members all of whom we hold in high respects, as they are our very distinguished colleagues. Thank you, Sir.

...(Interruptions)....

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA (Jharkhand): Sir, I may also be allowed to speak. *...(Interruptions)...*

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please. *...(Interruptions)...* One speaker at a time please. *...(Interruptions)...*

श्रीमती सुषमा स्वराज (मध्य प्रदेश): सर, एक मिनट ...**(व्यवधान)**... सर, विदेश मंत्री जी ने जो बयान दिया है, उससे एक आयाम और जुड़ गया है...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition wishes to speak. *...(Interruptions)...* Please sit down. *...(Interruptions)...* Please sit down. The hon. Leader of the Opposition wishes to speak. *...(Interruptions)...*

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am grateful to the hon. the Minister of External Affairs for having shared with us what I will term as his preliminary views. I might, Sir, take this opportunity to also mention to the hon. the Minister of External Affairs, who perhaps in the ruling alliance — or misalliance now — has the longest and the greatest experience both of Government as also of the Party. Sir, I also wish to add that this is a very unhappy tendency, and this tendency should be stopped now because we read reports that a few days back, when this confusion between alliance partners was going on, the Foreign Secretary was called to explain to the alliance partners the details of what was happening or not happening. This is highly objectionable. The Foreign Secretary or any Secretary to the Government of India or Ambassadors are not staff of one party or another. They serve the Republic and if they serve the Republic, as in this case the Ambassador serves the Republic, he can certainly have a viewpoint, as Ambassadors will have a viewpoint. But that viewpoint has to be subject to the Government to which he reports, which has appointed him the Ambassador there.

If the Executive becomes totally unanswerable to the Legislature, then we, having already developed a situation in which a denigration of the Legislature by the Judiciary takes place almost on a daily basis, and now, Sir, if the Executive were also to join — I am sure Pranab Babu would share with me, as indeed he has, my anxiety and concern — that this certainly is not acceptable to the Legislature. It is persuaded by this concern that I cited the instance of the Foreign Secretary coming and briefing political parties. If it is incorrect, I would be very happy to know that it is incorrect and if it is correct, it only adds to my worry. That is all that I wish to say. I think we do need a fuller text of what the distinguished Ambassador of India in

Washington has said. I am sure what the hon. the Minister of External Affairs has mentioned here is absolutely correct and he has factually recounted and shared with us what has been mentioned to him by the Ambassador. I do also appreciate that he shares our anguish at the comments that have been made.

It would help, Mr. Chairman, if the hon. Pranab Babu also obtained the fuller text of the statements made there. It is, after all, a newspaper chain, or I think it is Rediff that has put it out, and if Rediff has made an error then it is yet another wrong that has taken place. So, all these — the collectivity of it — have to be addressed. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Sitaram Yechury. *(Interruptions)*

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, his name has been taken.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, I have been named in the report. I must also get an opportunity to speak. I do not wish to challenge his right; you may ask him. But I must also be allowed to speak.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, I will do that. ...*(Interruption)*...

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY (Puducherry): Sir, are we having a discussion on the subject? ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Yes, we are having a discussion. ...*(Interruptions)*... We are having a discussion. We must have a discussion...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: Mr. Chairman Sir... *(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI AMAR SINGH (Uttar Pradesh): Let Comrade Yechury speak. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please sit down ...*(Interruptions)*... Yes, Mr. Yechury.

SHRI SITARAM YECHURY (West Bengal): Thank you, Mr. Chairman Sir. I rise here to only express our anguish, not only as people who are opposed to this nuclear deal, who have been named or castigated or talked about, but even as Parliament. We cannot have an official of the Government of India passing a judgement on a debate that is yet to take place in the House. And still, the debate is not taking place. And, as the hon. Minister has rightly pointed out and, through you, I would like to convey it also to the Government, that this is an insult and affront to the institution of the Legislature and it must be taken in that spirit. You please examine; you have the fuller text, as the Leader of the Opposition has asked for. You please examine the authenticity and veracity of what has been said. But, as the Minister himself has said, if this is true, then this statement is completely unwarranted and unacceptable, which means, Sir, that the next logical step has to follow. If the veracity has been proven, then this gentleman cannot continue to represent the Indian Republic in the United States of America and that process will have to be carried forward on the basis of examination of the veracity as the Government has done. And I only hope through you, Sir, that we will get this assurance if what has been stated is correct, as the Minister has himself said this is unacceptable to us. And it is not permissible for an officer to make such statements. Then, the next logical step must be followed up after

examining the veracity. And I wish the Government would give that assurance to this House.

...(Interruptions)...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Please, you have not ...*(Interruptions)*...

श्री अमर सिंह: सर, मैं माननीय श्री सीताराम येचुरी जी के बयान से बिल्कुल सहमत हूँ। ...**(व्यवधान)**... इस तरह का बयान नौकरशाही को नहीं देना चाहिए। अगर उन्होंने ऐसा बयान दिया है तो उन्हें तुरंत वापस बुलाएं ...**(व्यवधान)**...

MR. CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Yashwant Sinha.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, I have filed a Notice of Breach of Privilege against our Ambassador in Washington, Shri Ronen Sen. As I have said in my Notice of Breach of Privilege, this is the breach of privilege of the entire House, because he has called us 'headless chickens'. I think nothing worse has ever been said about parliamentarians by a serving officer of the Government of India. To describe this august assembly as 'headless chickens' is an abusive language the parallel of which is difficult to find in our democracy. I have been personally quoted; I am a former External Affairs Minister myself. This gentleman has served with me in various capacities and, therefore, I am particularly pained that I have been described as 'opposing the Indo-US Nuclear Deal, without reading the text', which shows that I am not merely a headless chicken, I am also a brainless chicken! This is the kind of ...*(Interruptions)*... before my head was either *halaled* or chopped off; we don't know whether it is *halal* or *jhatka*. That is another issue. But, Sir, the point that I am making is that these remarks have been made; they have been published and they are in the public domain. It is not a private conversation. It is all in public domain and, therefore, Sir, I would suggest, differing slightly with what has been said so far, that the Ambassador in Washington and the Rediff correspondent should jointly be summoned by this whole House which can act as the Privilege Committee of the House itself. There is a precedent. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I remind the hon. Member that privilege issues are taken up in pursuance of a certain procedure. If you have given a notice, it will be duly processed.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Sir, with great respect I would like to point out that there is a precedent in this House when the whole House acted as the Privilege Committee of the House and a certain former Minister was called to the bar of this House. He was admonished by the Chairperson by calling him to the bar of this House. He was a former Minister. He was summoned. So, I am making a formal proposal to you, Sir, that this whole House should become the Privilege Committee of the House and the Ambassador should be called to the bar of the House, and he should be admonished and upbraided. This is my demand, Sir, and I hope that it will find support because it is not a partisan issue. I respect the External Affairs Minister for what he has said and, therefore, this House should accept this proposal and constitute itself into a Privilege Committee and call him to the bar of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is premature. ...*(Interruptions)*... The position stated by the hon. Minister is quite clear. So, any other conclusion at this stage is premature. ...*(Interruptions)*... Papers to be laid on the Table of the House. ...*(Interruptions)*...